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# PHASES OF MADRID

BY WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

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## I

THERE had been the usual alarm about the lack of places in the Sud-Express which we were to take at Valladolid, but we chanced getting them, and our boldness was rewarded by getting a whole compartment to ourselves and a large, fat, friendly conductor with an eye out for tips in every direction. The lunch in our dining-car was for the first time in Spain not worth the American price asked for it; everywhere else on the Spanish trains I must testify that the meals were excellent and abundant; and the refectio*n* may now have felt in some obscure sort the necromancy of the scene in which the Sud-Express seemed to have lost itself. It seldom happens in Spain that the landscape is the same on both sides of the railroad track, but here it was malignly alike on one hand and on the other, though we seemed to be running along the slope of an upland so that the left hand was higher and the right lower. It was more as if we were crossing the face of some prodigious rapid, whose surges were the granite boulders tossing everywhere in masses from the size of a man's fist to the size of a house. In a wild chaos they wallowed against one another, the greater bearing on their tops or between them on their shoulders smaller regular or irregular masses of the same gray stone. Everywhere among their awful shallows grew gray live-oaks and among the rocks and trees spread tufts of gray shrub. Suddenly, over the frenzy of this mad world, a storm of cold rain broke, whirling, and cold gray mists drove, blinding the windows and chilling us where we sat within. From time to time the storm lifted and showed again this vision of nature hoary as if with immemorial eld. If at times we seemed to have run away from it, again it closed in upon us and held us captive in its desolation.

With longer and longer intervals of relief it closed upon us for the last time in the neighborhood of the gloomiest pile that ever a man built for his life, his death, and his prayer between; but before we came to the palace-tomb of the Escorial we had clear in the distance the vision of the walls and roofs and towers of the medieval city of Avila. It is said to be the perfectest relic of the Middle Ages, and we solemnly promised ourselves to come back some day from Madrid and spend it in Avila. But we never came, and Avila remains a vision of walls and roofs and towers, tawny gray glimpsed in a rift of the storm that swept us on toward the Spanish capital.

## II

We were very glad indeed to get to Madrid, though dismayed by apprehensions of the *octroi*, which we felt sure awaited us. We recalled the behavior of the mystic official of Valladolid who bumped our baggage about on the roof of our omnibus, and we thought that in Madrid some such official could not do less than shatter our boxes and scatter their contents in the streaming street. What was, then, our surprise, our joy, to find that in Madrid there was no *octroi* at all and that the amiable *mozos* who took our things scarcely knew what we meant when we asked for it. At Madrid they scarcely wanted our tickets at the gate of the station, and we found ourselves in the soft embrace of modernity, so dear after the feudal rigors of Old Castile, when we mounted into a motor omnibus and sped away through the spectacular town so like Paris, so like Rome as to have no personality of its own except in this resemblance, and never stopped till the liveried service swarmed upon us at the door of the latest and best hotel in the city.

Here the modernity which had so winningly greeted us at the station welcomed us yet more consolingly. There was not only steam-heating, but the steam was on; it wanted but a turn of the hand at the radiators and the rooms were warm. The rooms themselves responded to our appeal and looked down into a silent inner court deaf to the clatter of the streets; and sleep haunted the very air, distracted, if at all, by the instant facility and luxury of the appliances. Was it really in Spain that a metallic tablet at the bed-head invited the wanderer to call with one button for the *camerero*, another for the *camerera*, and another for the

*mozo*, who would all instantly come speaking English like so many angels? Were we to have these beautiful chambers for a humble two dollars and forty cents a day? And if it was true, why did we ever leave them and try for something ever so much worse and so very little cheaper? Let me be frank with the reader whom I desire for my friend and own that we were frightened from this hotel by the mere rumor of its prices. I paid my bill there, which was imagined with scrupulous fulness to the last possible centimo, and so I may disinterestedly affirm that it is the only hotel in Madrid where you get the worth of your money even when the money seems more but scarcely is so. In all Spain I know of only two other hotels which may compare with it, and they are the English hotels, one at Ronda and one at Algeciras. If I add falteringly the hotel where we stayed a night in Toledo, and the hotel where we abode a fortnight in Seville, I heap the measure of justice and press it down.

We did not begin at once our insensate search for another hotel in Madrid; but the sky had cleared and we went out into the strange capital, so uncharacteristically characteristic, to find tea at a certain café we had heard of. It looked out across this handsome street to a club that I never knew the name of, where at a series of open windows was a flare of young men in silk hats leaning out on their elbows and letting no passing fact of the avenue escape them. It was worth their study, and if I had been an idle young Spaniard or an idle old one I would have asked nothing better than to spend my Sunday afternoons poring from one of those windows on my well-known world of Madrid as it babbled by. Even in my quality of alien, newly arrived, and ignorant of that world, I already felt its fascination.

Sunday in Spain is, perhaps, different from other days of the week to the Spanish sense, but to the traveler it is too like them to be distinguishable except in that guilty Sabbath consciousness which is probably an effect from original sin in every Protestant soul. The casual eye could not see but that in Madrid every one seemed as much or as little at work as on any other day. My own casual eye noted that the most picturesquely evident thing in the city was the country life which seemed so to pervade it. In the Calle de Alcalá, flowing to the Prado out of the Puerta del Sol, there passed a current of farm carts and farm

wagons more conspicuous than any urban vehicles, as they jingled by, with men and women astride or atop the heavily laden panniers, on their sleigh-belled donkeys. The donkeys bore a part literally leading in all the rustic equipages, and with their superior intellect found a way through the crowds for the string-teams of the three or four large mules that followed them in harness. Whenever we saw a team of mules without this sage guidance we learned to tremble for their safety; as for horses, no team of them attempted the difficult passage, though ox teams seemed able to dispense with the path-finding donkeys.

To be sure, the horses abounded in cabs, which were mostly bad more or less. It is an idiosyncrasy of the cabs in Madrid that only the open victorias have rubber tires. If you go in a coupé you must consent to be ruthlessly bounced over the rough pavements; the coupé therefore is not in favor since in its conservative disuse it accumulates a smell not to be acquired out of Spain. One such vehicle I had which I thought must have been stabled in the house of Cervantes at Valladolid and rushed on the Sud-Express for my service at Madrid; the stench in it was such that after a short drive to the house of a friend I was fain to dismiss it at a serious loss in pesetas and take the risk of another which might have been as bad. Fortunately, a kind lady intervened with a private carriage and a coachman shaved that very day, whereas my poor old cabman, who was of one and the same smell as his cab, had not been shaved for three days.

### III

This seems the place to note the fact that no Spaniard in humble life shaves oftener than once in three days and that you always see him on the third day just before he has shaved. But all this time I have left myself sitting in the café looking out on the club that looks out on the Calle de Alcalá and keeping the waiter waiting with a jug of hot milk in his hand while I convince him (such a friendly, smiling man he is and glad of my instruction!) that in tea one always wants the milk cold. To him that does not seem reasonable, since one wants it hot in coffee and chocolate; but he yields to my prejudice, and after that he always says, "*Ah, leche fría!*" and we smile radiantly together in the bond of comradery which cold milk establishes between

man and man in Spain. As yet tea is a novelty in that country, though the young English Queen, universally loved and honored, has made it the fashion in high life. Still, it is hard to overcome such a prepossession as that of hot milk in tea and in some places you cannot get it cold for love or money.

But again I leave myself waiting in that café, where slowly and to the last not overwhelmingly in number the beautiful plaster-pale Spanish ladies gather with their husbands and have chocolate. It is a riotous dissipation for them, though it does not sound so; the home is the Spanish ideal of the woman's place, as it is of our anti-suffragists, though there is nothing corresponding to our fireside in it; and the café is her husband's place without her. When she walks in the street, where mostly she drives, she walks with her eyes straight before her; to look either to the right or left, especially if a man is on either hand, is a superfluity of naughtiness. The habit of not looking straight ahead is formed in youth and it continues through life; so at least it is said, and if I cannot affirm it I will not deny it. The beautiful black eyes so discreetly directed look as often from mantillas as hats even in Madrid, which is the capital and much infested by French fashions. You must not believe it when any one tells you that the mantilla is going out; it prevails everywhere and increases from north to south, till in Seville it is almost universal. Hats are worn there only in driving, but at Madrid there were many hats worn in walking, though whether by Spanish women or by foreigners of course one could not, though a wayfaring man and an American, stop them to ask.

There are more women in the street at Madrid than in the provincial cities, perhaps because it is the capital and cosmopolitan, and perhaps because the streets are many of them open and pleasant, though there are enough of them dark and narrow, too. I do not know just why the Puerta del Sol seems so much ampler and gayer than the Calle de Alcalá; it is not really wider, but it seems more to concentrate the coming and going, and with its high-hotelled opposition of corners is of a supreme spectacularity. Besides, the name is so fine: what better could any city place ask than to be called Gate of the Sun? Perpetual trams wheeze and whistle through it; large shops face upon it; the sidewalks are thronged with passers, and the many

little streets opening on it pour their streams of traffic and travel into it on the right and left. It is mainly fed by the avenues leaving the royal palace on the west, and its eddying tide empties through the Calle de Alcalá into the groves and gardens of the Prado, whence it spreads over all the drives and parks east and north and south.

## IV

For a premeditated capital Madrid is very well indeed. It has not the symmetry which forethought gave the topography of Washington or the beauty which afterthought has given Paris. But it makes you think a little of Washington and a great deal of Paris, though a great deal more yet of Rome. It is Renaissance so far as architecture goes and it is very modern Latin, so that it is of the older and the newer Rome that it makes you think. From time to time it seemed to me I must be in Rome, and I recovered myself with a pang to find I was not. Yet, as I say, Madrid was very well indeed, and when I reflected I had to own that I had come there on purpose to be there and not to be in Rome, where also I should have been so satisfied to be.

I do not know but we chose our second hotel when we left our first because it was so Italian, so Roman. It had a wide grape-arbor before it, with a generous spread of trellised roof through which dangled the grape bunches among the leaves of the vine. Around this arbor at top went a balustrade of marble with fat *putti*: marble boys, on the corners, who would have watched over the fruit if they had not been preoccupied with looking like so many thousands of *putti* in Italy. They looked like Italian *putti* with a difference, the difference that passes between all the Spanish things and the Italian things they resemble. They were coarser and grosser in figure, and though amiable enough in aspect, they lacked the refinement, the air of pretty appeal which Italian art learns from nature to give the faces of *putti*. Yet they were charming, and it was always a pleasure to look at them posing in pairs at the corners of the balustrade, and perhaps dozing in the hours of siesta. If they had been in wood, Spanish art would have known how to make them better, but in stone they were well enough, and during the generations they had been there their plump stomachs had been acceptably weather-beaten white.

I do not know if they had been there long enough to have witnessed the murder of Cromwell's ambassador done in our street by two Jacobite gentlemen who could not abide his coming to honor in the land where they were in exile from England. That must have been some time about the middle of the century after Philip II., bigot as he was, could not bear the more masterful bigotry of the archbishop of Toledo and brought his court from that ancient capital and declared Madrid henceforward the capital forever; which did not prevent Philip III. from taking his court to Valladolid and making that the capital *en titre* when he liked. However, some other Philip or Charles, or whoever, returned with his court to Madrid, and it has ever since remained the capital and has come with many natural disadvantages to look its supremacy. For my pleasure I would rather live in Seville, but that would be a luxurious indulgence of the love of beauty and like a preference for Venice in Italy when there was Rome to live in. Madrid is not Rome, but it makes you think of Rome, as I have said, and if it had a better climate it would make you think of Rome still more. Notoriously, however, it has not a good climate and we had not come at the right season to get the best of the bad. The bad season itself was perverse, for the rains do not usually begin in their bitterness at Madrid before November, and now they began early in October. The day would open fair with only a few little white clouds in the large blue, and if we could trust others' experience we knew it would rain before the day closed; only a day absolutely clear could warrant the hope of a day fair till sunset. Shortly after noon the little white clouds would drift together and be joined by others till they hid the large blue, and then the drops would begin to fall. By that time the air would have turned raw and chill, and the rain would be of a cold which it held through the night.

This habit of raining every afternoon was what kept us from seeing rank, riches, and beauty in the Paseo de la Castellana, where they drive every fine afternoon; they remained at home even more persistently than we did, for with that love of the fashionable world for which I am always blaming myself I sometimes took a cab and fared desperately forth in pursuit of them. Only once did I catch a glimpse of them. but that once I saw a closed carriage of them weltering along the drive between the trees and the



trams that border it, with the coachman and footman snugly sheltered under umbrellas on the box. This was something, though not a great deal; I could not make out the people inside the carriage; yet it was enough to verify the fact that the great world does drive in the Paseo de la Castellana and does not drive in the Paseo del Prado; that is quite abandoned, even on the wettest days, to the very poor and perhaps unfashionable people.

## V

It may have been our comparative defeat with fashion in its most distinctive moments of pleasuring (for one thing I wished to see how the dreariness of Madrid gaiety in the Paseo de la Castellana would compare with that of Roman gaiety on the Pincian) which made us the more determined to see a bull-fight in the Spanish capital. We had vowed ourselves in coming to Spain to set the Spaniards an example of civilization by inflexibly refusing to see a bull-fight under any circumstances or for any consideration; but it seemed to us that it was a sort of public duty to go and see the crowd, what it was like, in the time and place where the Spanish crowd is most like itself. We would go and remain in our places till everybody else was placed, and then, when the picadores and banderilleros and matadores were all ranged in the arena, and the gate was lifted and the bull came rushing madly in, we would rise and go inexorably away before he had time to gore anybody. This union of self-indulgence and self-denial seemed almost an act of piety when we learned that the bull-fight was to be on Sunday, and we prepared ourselves with tickets quite early in the week. On Saturday afternoon it rained, of course, but the worst was that it rained on Sunday morning and the clouds did not lift till noon. Then the glowing concierge of our hotel, a man so gaily hopeful, so expansively promising that I could hardly believe he was not an Italian, said that there could not possibly be a bull-fight that day; the rain would have made the arena so slippery that man, horse, and bull would all fall down together in a common ruin, with no hope whatever of hurting one another.

We gave up this bull-fight at once, but we were the more resolved to see a bull-fight because we still owed it to the Spanish people to come away before we had time to look at it, and we said we would certainly go at Cordova, where

we should spend the next Sabbath. At Cordova we learned that it was the closed season for bull-fighting, but vague hopes of usefulness to the Spanish public were held out to us at Seville, the very metropolis of bull-fighting, where the bulls came bellowing up from their native fields athirst for the blood of the profession and the *aficionados*, who outnumber there the amateurs of the whole rest of Spain. But at Seville we were told that there would be no more bull-feasts (as the Spaniards much more preferably call the bull-fights) till April, and now we were only in October. We said, Never mind, we would go to a bull-feast in Granada; but at Granada the season was even more hopelessly closed. In Ronda itself, which is the heart, as Seville is the home, of the bull-feast, we could only see the inside of the empty arena; and at Algeciras the outside alone offered itself to our vision. By this time the sense of duty was so strong upon us that if there had been a bull-feast we would have shared in it and stayed through till the last *spada* dropped dead, gored through, at the knees of the last bull transfixed by his unerring sword; and the other *torreros*, the *banderilleros* with their darts, and their *picadores* with their disemboweled horses, lay scattered over the blood-stained arena. Such is the force of a high resolve in strangers bent upon a lesson of civilization to a barbarous people when disappointed of their purpose. But we learned too late that only in Madrid is there any bull-feasting in the winter. In the provincial cities the bulls are dispirited by the cold; but in the capital, for the honor of the nation, they somehow pull themselves together and do their poor best to kill and be killed. Yet in the capital where the zeal of the bulls and, I suppose, of the bull-fighters is such, it is said that there is a subtle decay in the fashionable, if not popular, esteem of the only sport which remembers in the modern world the gladiatorial shows of imperial Rome. It is said, but I do not know whether it is true, that the young English Queen, who has gladly renounced her nation and religion for the people who seem so to love her, cannot endure the bloody sights of the bull-feast; and when it comes to the horses dragging their entrails across the ring, or the *spada* despatching the bull, or the bull tossing a *banderillero* in the air, she puts up her fan. It is said also that the young Spanish King, who has shown himself such a merciful-minded youth and seems so eager to make the best of the

bad business of being a king at all, sympathizes with her and shows an obviously abated interest at these supreme moments.

## VI

I do not know whether or not it was because we had failed with the bull-feast that we failed to go to any sort of public entertainment in Madrid. It certainly was in my book to go to the theater and see some of those modern plays which I had read so many of, and which I had translated one of for Lawrence Barrett in the far-off days before the flood of native American dramas now deluging our theater. That play was "Un Drama Nueva," by Estebanez, which between us we called "Yorick's Love," and which my very knightly tragedian made his battle-horse during the latter years of his life. I was always proud of this success, and I boasted of it to the bookseller in Madrid, whom I interested in finding me some still modernier plays after quite failing to interest another bookseller. Your Spanish merchant seems seldom concerned in a mercantile transaction; but perhaps it was not so strange in the case of this Spanish bookseller, because he was a German and spoke a surprising English in response to my demand whether he spoke any. He was the frowsiest bookseller I ever saw, and he was in the third day of his unshavenness, with a shirt-front and coat-collar plentifully bedandruffed from his shaggy hair; but he entered into the spirit of my affair, and said if that Spanish play had succeeded so wonderfully, then I ought to pay fifty per cent. more than the current price for the other Spanish plays which I wanted him to get me. I laughed with him at the joke which I found simple earnest when our glowing concierge gave me the books next day, and I perceived that the proposed supplement had really been paid for them on my account. I should not now be grieving for the incident if the plays had proved better reading than they did on experiment. Some of them were from the Catalan, and all of them dealt with the simpler actual life of Spain; but they did not deal impressively with it, though they seemed to me more hopeful in conception than certain psychological plays of ten or fifteen years ago which the Spanish authors had too clearly studied from Ibsen.

They might have had their effect in the theater, but the rainy weather had not only spoiled my sole chance of the bull-feast; the effect of it in a stubborn cold forbade me

the night air and kept me from testing any of the new dramas on the stage, which is always giving new dramas in Madrid. The stage, or rather the theater, is said to be truly a passion with the Madrileños, who go every night to see the whole or the part of a play and do not mind seeing the same play constantly, as if it were opera. They may not care to see the play so much as to be seen at it; that happens in every country; but no doubt the plays have a charm which did not impart itself from the printed page. The companies are reported very good, but the reader must take this from me at second hand, as he must take the general society fact. I only know that people ask you to dinner at nine, and if they go to the theater afterward they cannot well come away till toward one o'clock. It is after this hour that the *tertulia*, that peculiarly Spanish function, begins, but how long it lasts or just what it is I do not know. I am able to report confidently, however, that it is a species of *salon*, and that it is said to be called a *tertulia* because of the former habit in the guests, and no doubt the hostess, of quoting the poet Tertullian. It is of various constituents, according as it is a fashionable, a literary, or an artistic *tertulia*, or all three with an infusion of science. Oftenest, I believe, it is a domestic affair, and all degrees of cousinship resort to it with brothers and sisters and uncles, who meet with the pleasant Latin liking of frequent meetings among kindred. In some cases, no doubt, it is a brilliant reunion where lively things are said; in others, it may be dull; in far the most cases it seems to be held late at night or early in the morning.

## VII

It was hard, after being shut up several days, that one must not go out after nightfall, and if one went out by day one must go with closed lips and avoid all talking in the street under penalty of incurring the dreaded pneumonia of Madrid. Except for that dreaded pneumonia, I believe the air of Madrid is not so pestilential as it has been reported. Public opinion is beginning to veer in favor of it, just as the criticism which has pronounced Madrid commonplace and unpicturesque because it is not obviously old is now finding a charm in it peculiar to the place. Its very modernity embodies and imparts the charm, which will grow as the city grows in wideness and straightness. It is in the

newer quarter that it recalls Rome, or the newer quarters of Rome; but there is an old part of it that recalls the older part of Naples, though the streets are not quite so narrow nor the houses so high. There is like bargaining at the open stands, with the buyers and sellers chaffering over them; there is a likeness in the people's looks, too, but when it comes to the most characteristic thing of Naples, Madrid is not in it for a moment. I mean the bursts of song which all day long and all night long you hear in Naples; and this seems as good a place as any to say that to my experience Spain is a songless land. To be sure, in Toledo a woman came to her door across the way under our hotel window and sang over the slops she emptied into the street, but then she shut the door and we heard her no more. In Cordova there was as brief a peal of music from a house which we passed, and in Algeciras we heard one short sweet strain from a girl whom we could not see behind her lattice. Besides these chance notes we heard no other by any chance. But this is by no means saying that there is not abundant song in Spain; only it was kept quiet. I suppose that if we had been there in the spring instead of the fall we should at least have heard the birds singing. In Madrid there were not even many street cries; a few in the Puerta del Sol, yes; but the peasants who drove their mule teams through the streets scarcely lifted their voices in reproach or invitation; they could trust the wise donkeys that led them to get them safely through the difficult places. There was no audible quarreling among the cabmen, and when you called a cab it was useless to cry "Heigh!" or shake your umbrella; you made play with your thumb and finger in the air and sibilantly whispered; otherwise the cabman ignored you and went on reading his newspaper. The cabmen of Madrid are great readers; much greater, I am sorry to say, than I was, for whenever I bought a Spanish paper I found it extremely well written. Now and then I expressed my political preferences in buying *El Liberal*, which I thought very able; even *El Imparcial* I thought able, though it is less radical than *El Liberal*, a paper which is published simultaneously in Madrid with local editions in several provincial cities.

For all the street silence there seemed to be a great deal of noise, which I suppose came from the click of boots on the sidewalks and of hoofs in the roadways and the grind

and squeal of the trams, with the harsh smiting of the unrubbered tires of the closed cabs on the rough granite blocks of the streets. But there are asphalted streets in Madrid where the sound of the hoofs and wheels is subdued, and the streets rough and smooth are kept of a cleanliness which would put the streets of New York to shame, if anything could. Ordinarily you could get cabs anywhere, but if you wanted one very badly when remote from a stand there was more than one chance that a cab marked "*Libre*" would pass you with lordly indifference. As for motor taxicabs, there are none in the city, and at Cook's they would not take the responsibility of recommending any automobiles for country excursions.

### VIII

I linger over these sordid details because I must needs shrink before the mention of that incomparable gallery, the Museo del Prado. I am careful not to call it the greatest gallery in the world, for I think what the Louvre and the Pitti and the National Gallery are, and what our own Metropolitan is going to be; but surely the Museo del Prado is incomparable for its peculiar riches. It is part of the autobiographical associations with my Spanish travel that when John Hay was not yet, by thirty or forty years, the great statesman he became, but only the breeziest of young Secretaries of Legation, he blew surprisingly into my little carpenter's box in Cambridge one day, just two weeks from his post in Madrid, and boasted almost the first thing that the best Titians in the world were in the Prado galleries. I was too lately from Venice, in 1867, not to have my inward question whether there could be anywhere a better Titian than the "*Assumption*," but I loved Hay too much to deny him openly. I said that I had no doubt of it, and when the other day I went to the Prado it was with the wish of finding him perfectly right, triumphantly right. I had been from the first a strong partisan of Titian, and in many a heated argument with Ruskin, unaware of our controversy, I had it out with that most prejudiced partisan of Tintoretto. I always got the better of him, as one does in such dramatizations where one frames one's opponent's feeble replies for him; but now in the Prado, sadly and strangely enough, I began to wonder if Ruskin might not have tacitly had the better of me all the time. If Hay was right in holding that the best Titians in the world were in the Prado,

then I was wrong in having argued for Titian against Tintoretto with Ruskin. I could only wish that I had the "Assumption" there or some of those senators whose portraits I remembered in the Academy at Venice. The truth is that to my eye he seemed to weaken before the Spanish masters, though I say this, who must confess that I failed to see the great room of his portraits. The Italians who hold their own with the Spaniards are Tintoretto and Veronese; even Murillo was more than a match for Titian in such pictures of his as I saw, though properly speaking Murillo is to be known at his greatest only in Seville.

But Velasquez, but Velasquez! In the Prado there is no one else present when he is by, with his Philips and Charleses and their "villainous hanging of the nether lip," with his hideous court dwarfs and his pretty princes and princesses, his grandees and jesters, his allegories and battles, his pastorals and chases, which fitly have a vast salon to themselves, not only that the spectator may realize at once the rich variety and abundance of the master, but that such lesser lights as Rubens, Titian, Correggio, Giorgione, Tintoretto, Veronese, Rembrandt, Zurbaran, El Greco, Murillo, may not be needlessly dimmed by his surpassing splendor. I leave to those who know painting from the painter's art to appreciate the technical perfection of Velasquez; I take my stand outside of that and acclaim its supremacy in virtue of that reality which all Spanish art has seemed always to strive for and which in Velasquez it incomparably attains. This is the literary quality which the most untechnical may feel, and which is not clearer to the connoisseur than to the least unlearned. After Velasquez in the Prado we wanted Goya, and more and more Goya, who is as Spanish and as unlike Velasquez as can very well be. There was not enough Goya above stairs to satisfy us, but in the Goya room in the basement there are a series of scenes from Spanish life, mostly frolic campestrial things, which he did as patterns for tapestries, and which came near being enough in their way—the way of that reality which is so far from the reality of Velasquez.

The galleries of the Prado seem as full of copyists as they could have been fifty years ago, and many of them were making very good copies. I wish I could say they were working as diligently as copyists used to work, but copyists are now subject to frequent interruptions, not

from the tourists, but from one another. They used to be all men, mostly grown gray in their pursuit, but now they are both men and women and younger, and the women are sometimes very pretty. In the Prado one saw several pairs of such youth conversing together, forgetful of everything around them, and on terms so very like flirtations that they could not well be distinguished from them. They were terms that other Spanish girls could enjoy only with a wooden lattice and an iron grille between them and the *novios* outside their windows; and no tourist of the least heart could help rejoicing with them. In the case of one who stood with her little figure slanted and her little head tilted, looking up into the charmed eyes of a tall *rubio*, the tourist could not help rejoicing with the young man too.

The day after our day in the Prado we found ourselves in the Museum of Modern Art, through the kind offices of our mistaken cabman, when we were looking for the Archæological Museum. But we were not sorry, for some of the new or newer pictures and sculptures were well worth seeing, though we should never have tried for them. The force of the masters which the ideals of the past held in restraint here raged in unbridled excess. The new or newer Spanish art likes an immense canvas, as large as the side of a barn, and it chooses mostly a tragical Spanish history in which it riots with a young sense of power brave to see. There were a dozen of those mighty dramas which I would have liked to bring away with me if I had only had a town-hall big enough to put them into after I got them home. There were sculptures as masterful and as mighty as the pictures, but among the paintings there was one that seemed to subdue all the infuriate actions to the calm of its awful repose. This was Gisbert's "Execution of Torrejos and his Companions," who were shot at Malaga in 1830 for a rising in favor of constitutional government. One does not, if one is as wise as I, attempt to depict pictures, and I leave this most heroic, most pathetic, most heartbreaking, most consoling masterpiece for my reader to go and see for himself; it is almost worth going as far as Madrid to see. Never in any picture do I remember the like of those sad, brave, severe faces of the men standing up there to be shot, where already their friends lay dead at their feet. A tumbled top-hat in the foreground had an effect awfuller than a tumbled head would have had.



Besides this and those other histories there were energetic portraits and vigorous landscapes in the Modern Museum, where, if we had not been bent so on visiting the Archæological Museum, we would willingly have spent the whole morning. But we were determined to see the Peruvian and Mexican antiquities which we believed must be treasured up in it; and that we might not fail of finding it I gave one of the custodians a special peseta to take us out on the balcony and show us exactly how to get to it. He was so precise and so full in his directions that we spent the next half-hour in wandering fatuously round the whole region before we stumbled, almost violently, upon it immediately back of the Modern Museum. Will it be credited that it was then hardly worth seeing for the things we meant to see? The Peruvian and Mexican antiquities were so disappointing that we would hardly look at the Etruscan, Greek, and Roman things which it was so much richer in. To be sure, we had seen and overseen the like of these long before in Italy; but they were admirably arranged in this museum, so that without the eager help of the custodians (which two coppers would buy at any turn) we could have found pleasure in them, whereas the Aztec antiquities were mostly copies in plaster and the Inca jewelry not striking.

Before finding the place we had had the help of two policemen and one newsboy and a postman in losing ourselves in the Prado where we mostly sought for it, and with difficulty kept ourselves from being thrust into the gallery there. In Spain a man, or even a boy, does not like to say he does not know where a place is; he is either too proud or too polite to do it, and he will misdirect you without mercy. But the morning was bright and almost warm, and we should have looked forward to weeks of sunny weather if our experience had not taught us that it would rain in the afternoon, and if greater experience than ours had not instructed us that there would be many days of thick fog now before the climate of Madrid settled itself to the usual brightness of February. We had time to note again in the Paseo Castellana that it consists of four rows of acacias and tamarisks and a stretch of lawn, with seats beside it; the rest is bare grasslessness, with a bridle-path on one side and a tram-line on the other. If it had been late afternoon the Paseo would have been filled with the gay world; but,

being the late forenoon, we had to leave it well-nigh unpeopled and go back to our hotel, where the excellent midday breakfast merited the best appetite one could bring to it.

## IX

In fact, all the meals of our hotel were good, and of course they were only too superabundant. They were pretty much what they were everywhere in Spain, and they were better everywhere than they were in Granada, where we paid most for them. They were appetizing, and not of the cooking which the popular superstition attributes to Spain, where the hotel cooking is not rank with garlic or fiery with pepper, as the untraveled believe. At luncheon in our Madrid hotel we had a liberal choice of eggs in any form, the delicious *arroz à la Valencia*, a kind of risotto, with saffron to savor and color it; veal cutlets or beefsteak, salad, cheese, grapes, pears, and peaches, and often melon—the ever-admirable melon of Spain which I had learned to like in England. At dinner there were soup, fish, entrée, roast beef, lamb, or poultry, vegetables, salad, sweet cheese, and fruit; and there was pretty poor wine *ad libitum* at both meals. For breakfast there was good and true (or true enough) coffee, with rich milk, which if we sometimes doubted it to be goat's milk we were none the worse if none the wiser for, as at dinner we were not either if we unwittingly ate kid for lamb.

There were not many people in the hotel, but the dining-room was filled by citizens who came in with the air of frequenters. They were not people of fashion, as we readily perceived, but kindly-looking mercantile folk, and ladies painted as white as newly kalsomined house-walls; and all gravely polite. There was one gentleman as large round as a hogshead, with a triple arrangement of fat at the back of his neck which was fascinating. He always bowed when we met (necessarily with his whole back), and he ate with an appetite proportioned to his girth. I could wish still to know who and what he was, for he was a person very much to my mind. So was the head waiter, dark, silent, clean-shaven, who let me use my deplorable Spanish with him, till in the last days he came out with some very fair English which he had been courteously concealing from me. He looked own brother to the room-waiter in our corridor, whose companionship I could desire always to have. One could not be so confident of the sincerity of the little *camarera* who

slipped out of the room with a soft, sidelong "*De nada*" at one's thanks for the hot water in the morning; but one could stake one's life on the goodness of this *camarero*. He was not so tall as his leanness made him look; he was of a national darkness of eyes and hair which as imparted to his tertian clean-shavenness was a deep blue. He spoke, with a certain hesitation, a beautiful Castilian, delicately lisping the sibilants and strongly throating the gutturals; and what he said you could believe. He never was out of the way when wanted; he darkled with your boots and shoes in a little closet next your door and came from it with the morning coffee and rolls. In a stress of frequentation he appeared in evening dress in the dining-room at night and did honor to the place; but otherwise he was to be seen only in our corridor or in the cold, dark chamber at the stair-head where the *camareras* sat sewing, kept in check by his decorum. Without being explicitly advised of the fact, I am sure he was the best of Catholics, and that he would have burned me for a heretic if necessary, but he would have done it from his conscience and for my soul's good after I had recanted. He seldom smiled, but when he did you could see it was from his heart.

His contrast, his very antithesis, the joyous concierge, was always smiling, and was every way more like an Italian than a Spaniard. He followed us into the wettest Madrid weather with the sunny rays of his temperament, and welcomed our returning cab with an effulgence that performed the effect of an umbrella in the longish walk from the curbstone to the hotel door, past the grape arbor whose fruit ripened for us only in a single bunch, though he had so confidently prophesied our daily pleasure in it. He seemed at first to be the landlord, and without reference to higher authority he gave us beautiful rooms overlooking the bacchanal vine which would have been filled with sunshine if the weather had permitted. When he lapsed into the concierge he got us, for five pesetas, so deep and wide a wood-box, covered with crimson cloth, that he was borne out by the fact in declaring that the wood in it would last us as long as we stayed; it was oak wood, hard as iron, and with the bellows that accompanied it we blew the last billet of it into a solid glow by which we drank our last coffee in that hotel. His spirit, his genial hopefulness, reconciled us to the infirmities of the house during the period of transition

beginning for it and covering our stay. It was to be rebuilt on a scale out-Ritzing the Hôtel Ritz, but in the mean while it was not quite the Ritz. There was a time when the elevator-shaft seemed to have tapped the awful sources of the smell in the house of Cervantes at Valladolid, but I do not remember what blameless origin the concierge assigned to the odor, or whether it had anything to do with the horses and the hens which a chance-opened back door showed us stabled in the rear of the hotel's grandiose entrance.

Our tourist clientèle, thanks, I think, to the allure of our concierge for all comers, was most respectable, though there was no public place for people to sit but a small reading-room colder than the baths of Apollo. But when he entered the place it was as if a fire were kindled in the minute stove never otherwise heated, and the old English and French newspapers freshened themselves up to the actual date as nearly as they could. We were mostly, perhaps, Spanish families come from our several provinces for a bit of the season which all Spanish families of civil conditions desire more or less of: lean, dark fathers; slender, white-stuccoed daughters; and fat, white-stuccoed mothers; very still-faced and grave-mannered. We were also a few English, and from time to time a few Americans, but I believe we were not, however worthy, very great-world. The concierge who had so skilfully got us together was instant in our errands and commissions, and when it came to two of us being shut up with colds brought from Burgos it was he who supplemented the promptness of the apothecaries in sending our medicines, and coming himself at times to ask after our welfare.

## X

In a strange country all the details of life are interesting, and we noticed with peculiar interest that Spain was a country where the prescriptions were written in the vulgar tongue instead of the little Latin in which prescriptions are addressed to the apothecaries of other lands. We were disposed to praise the faculty if not the art for this, but our doctor forbade. He said it was because the Spanish apothecaries were so unlearned that they could not read even so little Latin as the shortest prescription contained. Still, I could not think the custom a bad one, though founded on ignorance, and I do not see why it should not have made for the greatest safety of those who took the medicine if

those who put it up followed a formula in their native tongue. I know that, at any rate, we found the Spanish medicines beneficial, and were presently suffered to go out-of-doors, but with those severe injunctions against going out after nightfall or opening our lips when we went out by day. It was rather a bother, but it was fine to feel oneself in the classic Madrid tradition of danger from pneumonia, and to be of the dignified company of Spanish gentlemen whom we met with the border of their cloaks over their mouths, like characters in a *capa y espada* drama.

There was almost as little acted as spoken drama in the streets. I have given my impression of the songlessness of Spain in Madrid as elsewhere, but if there was no street-singing there was often street-playing by pathetic bands of blind minstrels with guitars and mandolins. The blind abound everywhere in Spain in that profession of street beggary which I always encouraged, believing, as I do, that comfort in this unbalanced world cannot be too constantly reminded of misery. As the hunchbacks are in Italy, or the wooden peg-legged in England, so the blind are in Spain, for number. I could not say how touching the sight of their sightlessness was, or how the remembrance of it makes me wish that I had carried more coppers, or, as the Spaniards call them, *dogs*, big and little, with me when I set out. I would gladly authorize the reader, when he goes to Madrid, to do the charity I often neglected; he will be the better man, or even woman, for it; and he need not mind if his beneficiary is occasionally unworthy; he may be unworthy himself; I am sure I was.

But the Spanish street is rarely the theatrical spectacle that the Italian street nearly always is. Now and then there was a bit in Madrid which one would be sorry to have missed; such was the funeral of a civil magistrate, otherwise unknown to me, which I saw pass my café window: a most architectural black hearse, with a black roof, drawn by eight black horses, sable-plumed. The hearse was open at the sides, with the coffin fully showing, and a gold-laced *chapeau bras* lying on it. Behind came twenty or twenty-five gentlemen on foot in the modern ineffectiveness of frock-coats and top-hats, and after them eight or ten closed carriages. The procession passed without the least notice from the crowd which I saw at other times stirred to a flutter of emulation in its small boys by companies of infantry march-

ing to the music of sharply blown bugles. The men were handsomer than Italian soldiers, but not so handsome as the English, and in figure they were not quite the deplorable pygmies one often sees in France. Their bugles, with the rhythmical note which the tram-cars sound, and the guitars and mandolins of the blind minstrels, made the only street music I remember in Madrid.

Between the daily rains, which came in the afternoon, the sun was sometimes very hot, but it was always cool enough indoors. The indoors interests were not the art or story of the churches. The intensest Catholic capital in Christendom is, in fact, conspicuous in nothing more than the reputed uninterestingness of its churches. I went into one of them, however, with a Spanish friend, and I found it beautiful, most original, and most impressive for its architecture and painting, but I forget which church it was. We were going rather a desultory drive through those less frequented parts of the city which I have mentioned as like a sort of muted Naples: poor folk living much out-of-doors, buying and selling at hucksters' stands and booths, and swarming about the chief market, where the guilty were formerly put to death, but the innocent are now provisioned. Outside, the market was not attractive, and what it was within we did not look to see. We went rather to satisfy my wish to see whether the Manzanares is as groveling a stream as the guide-books pretend in their effort to give a just idea of the natural disadvantages of Madrid as the only great capital without an adequate river. But whether abetted by the arts of my friend or not, the Manzanares managed to conceal itself from me. When we left our carriage and went to look for it I saw only some pretty rills and falls which it possibly fed, and which lent their beauty to the charming up-and-down-hill walks, now a public pleasure, but formerly the groves and gardens of the Royal Palace.

## XI

I did not visit the palace, but the Royal Armory I had seen two days before on a gay morning that had not yet sorrowed to the afternoon's rain. At the gate of the palace I fell into the keeping of one of the authorized guides whom I wish I could identify so that I could send the reader to pay him the tip I came short in. It is a pang to think of the repressed disappointment in his face when in a mo-

ment of insensate sparing I gave him the bare peseta to which he was officially entitled instead of the two or three due his zeal and intelligence; and I strongly urge my readers to be on their guard against a mistaken meanness like mine. I can never repair that, for if I went back to the Royal Armory I should not know him by sight; and if I sought among the guides saying I was the stranger who had behaved in that shabby sort, how would it identify me among so many other shabby strangers? He had the intelligence to leave me and the constant companion of these travels to ourselves as we went about that treasury of wonders, but before we got to the armory he stayed us with a delicate gesture outside the court of the palace till a troop for the guard-mounting had gone in. Then he led us across the fine, beautiful quadrangle to the door of the museum, and waited for us there till we came out. By this time the space was brilliant with the confronted bodies of troops, those about to be relieved of guard duty, and those come to relieve them, and our guide got us excellent places where we could see everything and yet be out of the wind which was beginning to blow cuttingly through the gates and colonnades. There were all arms of the service—horse, foot, and artillery—and the ceremony, with its pantomime and parley, was much more impressive than the changing of the colors which I had once seen at Buckingham Palace. The Spanish privates took the business not less seriously than the British, and, however they felt, the Spanish officers did not allow themselves to look bored. The marching and countermarching was of a refined stateliness, as if the pace were not a goose step, but a peacock step; and the music was of an exquisitely plaintive and tender note which seemed to grieve rather than exult; I believe it was the royal march which they were playing, but I am not versed in such matters.

Nothing could have been fitter than the quiet beauty of the spectacle, opening through the westward colonnade to the hills and woods of the royal demesne, with yellowing and embrowning trees that billowed from distance to distance. Some day these groves and forests must be for the people's pleasure, as all royal belongings seem finally to be; and in the mean time I did not grudge the landscape to the young King and Queen who probably would not have grudged it to me. Our guide valued himself upon our admiration of

it; without our special admiration he valued himself upon the impressive buildings of the railway station in the middle distance. I forget whether he followed us out of the quadrangle into the roadway, where we had the advantage of some picturesque army wagons, and some wagoners in red-faced jackets and red trousers and top-boots with heavy fringes of leathern strings. Yet it must have been he who made us aware of a high-walled inclosure where soldiers found worthy of death by court-martial could be conveniently shot; though I think we discovered for ourselves the old woman curled up out of the wind in a sentry-box, and sweetly asleep there, while the boys were playing marbles on the smooth ground before it. I must not omit the peanut-roaster in front of the palace; it was in the figure of an ocean steamer nearly as large as the *Lusitania*, and had smoke coming out of the funnel, with rudder and screw complete and doll sailors climbing over the rigging.

But it is impossible to speak adequately of the things in that wonderful armory. If the reader has any pleasure in the harnesses of the Spanish kings and captains, from the great Charles the Fifth down through all the Philips and the Charleses, he can glut it there. Their suits begin almost with their steel baby-clothes, and adapt themselves almost to their senile decrepitude. There is the horse-litter in which the great Emperor was borne to battle, and there is the sword which Isabella the great Queen wore; and I liked looking at the lanterns and the flags of the Turkish galleys from the mighty sea-fight of Lepanto, and the many other trophies won from the Turks. The pavilion of Francis I. taken at Pavia was of no secondary interest, and everywhere was personal and national history told in the weapons and the armor of those who made the history. Perhaps some time the peoples will gather into museums the pens and pencils and chisels of authors and artists, and the old caps and gowns they wore, or the chairs they sat in at their work, or the pianos and violoncellos of famous musicians, or the planes of surpassing carpenters, or the hammers of eminent iron-workers; but these things will never be so picturesque as the equipments with which the military heroes saved their own lives or took others'. We who have never done either must not be unreasonable or impatient. It will be many a long century yet before we are appreciated at the value we now set upon ourselves. In the mean while



we do not have such a bad time, and we are not so easily forgotten as some of those princes and warriors.

## XII

I did not realize till I saw a play of Calderon's, ten years ago in New York, how much the Spanish drama has made Madrid its scene; and until one knows modern Spanish fiction one cannot know how essentially the incongruous city is the capital of the Spanish imagination. Of course the action of *Gil Blas* largely passes there, but *Gil Blas* is only adoptively a Spanish novel, and the native picaresque story is oftener at home in the provinces; but since Spanish fiction has come to full consciousness in the work of the modern masters it has resorted more and more to Madrid. If I speak only of Galdós and Valdés by name it is because I know them best as the greatest of their time; but I fancy the allure of the capital has been felt by every other modern more or less; and if I were a Spanish author I should like to put a story there. If I were a Spaniard at all, I should like to live there a part of the year, or to come up for some sojourn, as the real Spaniards do. In such an event I should be able to tell the reader more about Madrid than I now know. I should not be poorly keeping to hotels and galleries and streets and the like surfaces of civilization, but should be saying all sorts of well-informed and surprising things about my fellow-citizens. As it is, I have tried somewhat to say how I think they look to a stranger, and if it is not quite as they have looked to other strangers I do not insist upon my own impression. There is a great choice of good books about Spain, so that I do not feel bound to add to them with anything like finality.

I have tried to give a sense of the grand-opera effect of the street scene, but it is the grand opera as it shows itself in the pit and the boxes rather than on the stage. I have record of only one passage in real life, such as one often sees in Italy, where moments of the street are always waiting for transfer to the theater. A pair had posed themselves, across the way from our hotel, against the large, closed shutter of a shop which made an admirable background. The woman in a black dress, with a red shawl over her shoulders, stood statuesquely immovable, confronting the middle-class man, who, while people went and came about them, poured out his mind to her with many frenzied

gestures, but mostly using one hand for emphasis. He seemed to be telling something rather than asserting himself or accusing her; portraying a past fact or defining a situation; and she waited immovably silent till he had finished. Then she began, and warmed to her work, but apparently without anger or prejudice. She talked herself out, as he had talked himself out. He waited, and then he left her and crossed to the other corner. She called after him as he kept on down the street. She turned away, but stopped and turned again and called after him till he passed from sight. Then she turned once more and went her own way. Nobody minded, any more than if they had been two unhappy ghosts invisibly and inaudibly quarreling, but I remained, and remain to this day, afflicted because of the mystery of their dispute.

### XIII

We did not think there were so many boys, proportionately, or boys let loose, in Madrid as in the other towns we had seen, and we remarked to that sort of foreign sojourner who is so often met in strange cities that the children seemed like little men and women. "Yes," he said, "the Spaniards are not children until they are thirty or forty, and then they never grow up." It was, perhaps, too epigrammatic, but it may have caught at a fact. From another foreign sojourner I heard that the Catholicism of Spain, in spite of all newspaper appearances to the contrary and many bold novels, is still intense and unyieldingly repressive. But how far the severity of the Church characterizes manners it would be hard to say. Perhaps these are often the effect of temperament. One heard more than one saw of the indifference of shopkeepers to shoppers in Madrid; in Andalusia, say especially in Seville, one saw nothing of it. But from the testimony of sufferers it appears to be the Madrid shopkeeper's reasonable conception that if a customer comes to buy something it is because he, or more frequently she, wants it, and is more concerned than himself in the transaction. He does not put himself about in serving her, and if she intimates that he is rudely indifferent, and that though she has often come to him before she will never come again, he remains unaffected. From experience I cannot say how true this is, but certainly I failed to awaken any lively emotion in those booksellers of whom I tried to buy some modern plays. It

seemed to me that I was vexing them in the Oriental calm which they would have preferred to my money, or even my interest in the new Spanish drama. But in a shop where fans were sold the shopman, taken in an unguarded moment, seemed really to enter into the spirit of our selection for friends at home; he even corrected my wrong accent in the Spanish word for fan, which was certainly going a great way.

It was not the weather for fans in Madrid, where it rained that cold rain every afternoon, and once the whole of one day, and we could not reasonably expect to see fans in the hands of ladies in real life so much as in the pictures of ladies on the fans themselves. In fact, I suppose that to see the Madrileñas most in character one should see them in summer, which in Southern countries is the most characteristic season. Théophile Gautier was governed by this belief when he visited Spain in the hottest possible weather and left for the lasting delight of the world the record of that *Voyage en Espagne* which he made seventy-two years ago. He then thought the men better dressed than the women at Madrid. Their boots are as "varnished, and they are gloved as white as possible. Their coats are correct, and their trousers laudable; but the cravat is not of the same purity, and the waistcoat, that only part of modern dress where the fancy may play, is not always of irreproachable taste." As to the women: "What we understand in France as the Spanish type does not exist in Spain. . . . One imagines usually, when one says *mantilla* and *señora*, an oval, rather long and pale, with large, dark eyes, surmounted with brows of velvet, a thin nose, a little arched, a mouth red as a pomegranate, and above all a tone warm and golden, justifying the verse of romance, *She is yellow like an orange*. This is the Arab or Moorish type, and not the Spanish type. The Madrileñas are charming in the full acceptation of the word; out of four three will be pretty, but they do not answer at all to the idea we have of them. They are small, delicate, well formed, the foot narrow and the figure curved, the bust of a rich contour; but their skin is very white, the features delicate and mobile, the mouth heart-shaped, and representing perfectly certain portraits of the Regency. Often they have fair hair, and you cannot take three turns in the Prado without meeting eight blondes of all shades from the ashen blonde to the most vehement

red, the red of the beard of Charles V. It is a mistake to think there are no blondes in Spain. Blue eyes abound there, but they are not so much liked as the black.”

Is this a true picture of the actual Madrileñas? What I say is that seventy-two years have passed since it was painted, and the originals have had time to change. What I say is that it was nearly always raining, and I could not be sure. What I say, above all, is that I am not a Frenchman of the high Romantic moment, and that what I chiefly noticed was how beautiful the mantilla was whether worn by old or young, how fit, how gentle, how winning! I suppose that the women we saw walking in it were never of the highest class, who would be driving except when we saw them going to church. But they were often of the latest fashion, with their feet hobbled by the narrow skirts, of which they lost the last poignant effect by not having wide or high or slouch or swashbuckler hats on; they were not top-heavy. What seems certain is that the Spanish women are short and slight, or short and fat. I find it recorded in my notes that when a young English couple came into the Royal Armory the girl looked impossibly tall and fair.

The women of the lower classes are commonly handsome, and carry themselves finely; their heads are bare, even of mantillas, and their skirts are ample. When it did not rain they added to the gaiety of the streets, and, when it did, to their gloom. Wet or dry, the streets were always thronged with children as well as men and women; nobody, apparently, stayed indoors who could go out, and after two days' housing, even with a fire to air and warm our rooms, we did not wonder at the universal preference. As I have said, the noise that we heard in the streets was mainly the clatter of shoes and hoofs, but now and then there were street cries besides those I have noted. There was in particular a half-grown boy in our street who had a flat basket decorated with oysters at his feet, and for long hours of the day and dark he cried them incessantly. I do not know that he ever sold them, or cared; his affair was to cry them.

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS.